
Brokerage Clerks

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Nature of the Work

Brokerage clerks perform a number of different jobs with wide-ranging responsibilities; all involve computing and recording data pertaining to securities transactions. Brokerage clerks also may contact customers, take orders, and inform clients of changes to their accounts. Some of these jobs are more clerical and require only a high school diploma, while others are considered entry-level positions for which a bachelor's degree is needed. Brokerage clerks, who work in the operations departments of securities firms, on trading floors, and in branch offices, also are called margin clerks, dividend clerks, transfer clerks, and broker's assistants.

The broker's assistant, also called sales assistant, is the most common type of brokerage clerk. These workers typically assist two brokers, for whom they take calls from clients, write up order tickets, process the paperwork for opening and closing accounts, record a client's purchases and sales, and inform clients of changes in their accounts. All broker's assistants must be knowledgeable about investment products so that they can communicate clearly with clients. Those with a "Series 7" license can make recommendations to clients at the instruction of the broker. The Series 7 license, issued to securities and commodities sales representatives by the National Association of Securities Dealers, allows them to provide advice on securities to the public. (Securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Brokerage clerks in the operations areas of securities firms perform many duties to facilitate the sale and purchase of stocks, bonds, commodities, and other kinds of investments. These clerks produce the necessary records of all transactions that occur in their area of the business. Job titles for many of these clerks depend upon the type of work that they perform. Purchase-and-sale clerks, for example, match orders to buy with orders to sell. They balance and verify trades of stock by comparing the records of the selling firm with those of the buying firm. Dividend clerks ensure timely payments of stock or cash dividends to clients of a particular brokerage firm. Transfer clerks execute customer requests for changes to security registration and examine stock certificates for adherence to banking regulations. Receive-and-deliver clerks facilitate the receipt and delivery of securities among firms and institutions. Margin clerks record and monitor activity in customers' accounts to ensure that clients make payments and stay within legal boundaries concerning their purchases of stock.

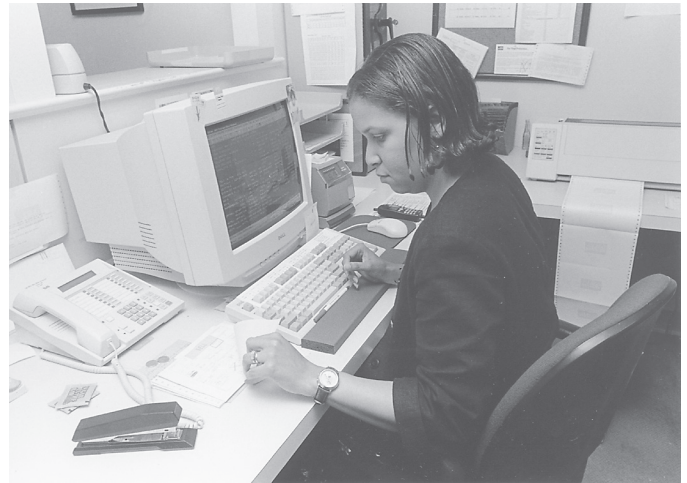
Technology is changing the nature of many of these jobs. A significant and growing number of brokerage clerks use custom-designed software programs to process transactions more quickly. Only a few customized accounts are still handled manually. Furthermore, the rapid expansion of online trading reduces the amount of paperwork because brokerage clerks are able to make trades electronically.

Employment

Brokerage clerks held about 78,000 jobs in 2002. Most worked in firms that sell securities and commodities.

Job Outlook

Employment of brokerage clerks is expected to decline through the year 2012, as technological advancements continue to automate many of their job duties. With people increasingly investing in securities, brokerage clerks will still be required to process larger volumes of transactions. Moreover, some brokerage clerks will still be needed



Brokerage clerks verify stock trades by comparing the records of sellers and buyers.

to update records, enter changes to customers' accounts, and verify transfers of securities. However, the emergence of online trading and widespread automation in the securities and commodities industry will limit demand for brokerage clerks in the coming decade. All job openings will stem from the need to replace clerks who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force.

(See the introductory statement on information and record clerks for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)